



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

UNITED STATES FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

For Release SEPTEMBER 26, 1957

LOUISIANA CANAL'S EFFECTS ON FISH AND WILDLIFE AROUSE CONCERN OF CONSERVATIONISTS

The concern of conservationists throughout the country over the possible effect of the Mississippi River-Gulf Project in Louisiana upon important commercial and sport fishing resources and upon valuable waterfowl marshes has been brought to the attention of Secretary of the Army Wilbur M. Brucker in a letter from Secretary of the Interior Fred A. Seaton.

"The dredging and disposal of the spoil involved in the construction of the canal could be destructive to important producing areas for shrimp and other shellfish and to nursery areas of various fin fishes. Valuable waterfowl marshes are also threatened," Secretary Seaton wrote.

The project plan provides for the construction of a ship canal 70 miles long, 36 feet deep, and 500 feet wide from the vicinity of New Orleans to the Gulf of Mexico. The basic plan for the project was prepared in 1946 by the Corps of Engineers.

Funds amounting to \$625,000 for the initiation of construction on this canal were included in the Public Works Appropriation Bill recently passed by the Congress.

Mr. Seaton emphasized that the project had never been investigated by fish and wildlife conservation agencies as contemplated by the Wildlife Coordination Act of 1946. However, as he stated, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service of the Department of the Interior is now initiating such investigations with funds transferred by the Corps of Engineers. Since these investigations are so far behind the stage reached in the engineering investigations, Secretary Seaton asked Secretary Brucker to take the necessary steps to have the Corps of Engineers bring the investigations of all phases of this project into balance.

In his letter Secretary Seaton also said, "We urge that detailed planning for the project consider fully the effects on fish and wildlife resources of constructing the canal and that your Department accept reasonable modifications in alignment of the canal and in the plan for deposition of spoil to hold to a minimum the destructive effects on these resources, even though this may increase project costs to some degree."

x x x